BOLSHEVIST RULE IN RUSSIA

Testimony given before a Sub-Committee of the Senate, Washington, by Mr. David R. Francis, United States Ambassador to Russia from April, 1916, to Nov., 1918.

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Evidence of U.S. Ambassador Francis at Washington, March 8, 1919

BELIEVING that the Soviet government of Russia was carrying on worldwide propaganda and that its agents and its literature were being extensively employed in America, the United States Senate early in the year appointed a committee to investigate these Bolshevist activities. Senator Overman was appointed chairman of the committee. The inquiry covered a wide range and brought to light first-hand information concerning the Soviet Government in Russia, its origin, its growth, its aims, and its methods. One of the most interesting witnesses was David R. Francis, United States Ambassador to Russia. Mr. Francis arrived in Petrograd on the 28th day of April, 1916, and remained there till November, 1918. He witnessed the downfall of the government of the Czar, the rise and fall of the provisional government under Alexander Kerensky, the calling of the Constituent Assembly and its dispersal by armed Bolshevists, and finally the institution of the Soviet government under Lenine and Trotsky. The following summary of the testimony given by Mr. Francis is taken from the official report of the proceedings of the Senate Committee on March 8, 1919.

Mr. Francis said he arrived in Petrograd April 28, 1916. Speaking of the causes that produced the chaos in Russian affairs, he said that the first act of demoralization committed under the Kerensky provisional government was the issuing of the general army order No. 1. Issued by the Soviet, it reduced all officers to the rank of soldiers, besides permitting the soldiers to elect their officers. The second demoralizing feature was to be attributed to Kerensky after he became Minister of War, one of his first acts being the decree to abolish the death penalty in the army, thus completing the demorali-

zation of the military forces. In spite of this, however, an uprising of the Bolshevists on the 3rd and 4th of July, which is our 16th and 17th, was suppressed. Kerensky made a mistake in failing to arrest Lenine and Trotsky on a charge of treason.

" There was ", said Mr. Francis, " as much difference between the Bolshevik revolutionary government and the provisional government as there was between the provisional government and Imperial government. The Bolsheviki were always trying to under-mine the Kerensky government." He further pointed out that 90 per cent of the 180,000,000 people in Russia are under-educated, while the other 10 per cent were, as he put it, over-educated. Between the two is a middle class called the Intellgentsia, and the Bolsheviki had been attempting to wipe out both the Bourgeoisie and the Intellgentsia.

BETRAYED THE ALLIES.

In order to bring out clearly the difference between the Kerensky government and the Bolsheviki, Senator King put the matter to Mr. Francis as follows:—

" Generally speaking you would say that the Kerensky government stood for law and order and for the establishment of a democratic form of government something like our own?

" Mr. FRANCIS: Exactly.

" Senator KING: And it was manned by patriots who earnestly sought the freedom of the people, of law and order and a stable democratic form of government; and that government, so long as it was in power, attempted to do all that it could in the prosecution of the war and to stand by the side of the Allies in fighting the central powers?

" Mr. FRANCIS: I think so.

" Senator KING: That while they were engaged in that laudable and proper effort, the Bolshevists, led by Lenine, Trotsky, and others, were attempting to undermine them, primarily for the purpose of getting control and establishing Proletariat dictatorship, and secondly for the purpose of betraying the cause of the Allies and getting Russia out of the war?

" Mr. FRANCIS: Exactly."

Continuing, the Ambassador said:—

LENINE A GERMAN AGENT.

"I wish to say here that I think that Lenine was a German agent from the beginning. They would never have permitted him to come through Germany if they had not thought so or known that they could use him. He dispersed money very liberally. Lenine, however, was not so opposed to Germany, as he was in favour of permitting a worldwide social revolution. He would have taken British money, American money, and French money and used it to promote this objective of his. He is a sincere man with sincere convictions, I think. I do not think he is right by a good deal, because later, when his power was tottering and could not be maintained in any other way, he encouraged or permitted the reign of terror that is now prevailing in Russia."

Replying to an inquiry from Senator King as to whether Russians, under Lenine and Trotsky, had ceased to be a military force, Mr. Francis said that this was the situation exactly, and that they had betrayed the Allies. When he went to Russia there was enlisted an army of 12,000,000 men, which had been increased to 16,000,000 before the revolution, and there was a call for 3,000,000 men which had been matured when the Bolshevik revolution took place. Of these 16,000,000 men, 2,000,000 had been wounded, while another 2,000,000 had been killed and died from disease. No army approaching it in size had ever before been organized. He also thought that the demobilization of the army had been in pursuance of the plan of Lenine and Trotsky to destroy it.

BROKE UP CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

Touching on the calling and breaking up of the Constituent Assembly by the Bolsheviki, Mr. Francis said that it was first fixed for the 27th of November, 1917, but was postponed to some day in December; the day before the date set for the meeting the Cadet members in Petrograd were arrested as counter-revolutionaries. Some of them, anticipating arrest, had not come. Among these were Milukoff, Radzianko, and Kerensky. The Bolshevik government announced that it would not permit the Assembly to convene then, and they postponed it until the 19th of January, 1918,

saying that they would not permit it to organize if there were not 400 members present. There was that number present, and a great popular demonstration took place in Petrograd, the people manifesting their joy over the assembling of the Constituent Assembly. The Bolsheviki were in the minority, and this notwithstanding that the Cadets had not come and that some of the social revolutionists were also absent. After the election of officers the Bolshevists withdrew. Tchernoff was elected presiding officer, and, after several decrees had been passed, a drunken sailor walked in and said, "I am tired of this business. We want to go to bed." This was about three or four o'clock in the morning. "We will give you ten minutes more" he added. Armed Bolshevist soldiers were in the corridors and in the aisles of the convention hall. Between four and five o'clock in the morning the sitting was adjourned until 11 o'clock the next day. On that day, however, the Bolshevik government took charge of the Duma hall, not allowing any of the members to enter, and consequently the Assembly was broken up.

NO ELECTION PERMITTED.

Since that time the Bolsheviki has never allowed a Constituent Assembly to be held, nor had it called an election for such an assembly. Mr. Francis pointed out that the Soviet is the name of a form of government while Bolshevism is the name of a party. One of the basic principles of the Soviet government is that it would not allow a man or woman, who employs another human being, to vote. Since the dictatorship of Lenine and Trotsky, no general election had been held in so far as the general government was concerned. They were there as usurpers and did not represent more than 10 per cent of the Russians. The Constituent Assembly, which had been prevented from meeting, was as truly representative as it was possible to have at that time.

GOT MONEY FROM GERMANY.

Asked by Senator King if he believed that Germany had furnished Lenine with money to debauch his own country and to aid in betraying the Allied cause, Mr. Francis said he believed that this was so. After signing

the Brest-Litovsk treaty the army was permitted to go home, the soldiers having been promised bread, peace, and land.

" One Russian landowner was telling me," said Mr. Francis, " that they attempted to divide his herd of blooded cattle, and they came across a bull, a very fine bull that they could not agree upon as to which one should have it, so they killed the bull and divided the carcass."

BOLSHEVISTS USURPERS.

" During all this time," Mr. Francis continued, " we treated the Bolsheviki as usurpers. I did not think they represented, and I do not think now they represent, more than 10 per cent of the Russian people. The Bolsheviki following changes. There were people there who were Bolshevists four and six months ago but who are opposed to the Bolshevists now. The Bolsheviki army to-day is variously estimated at from 200,000 to 700,000 men, but they are not a body, they are scattered over the country and are composed of Lett and Russian Red Guards, and Russians were forced to serve.

You see they have been arresting the women for the past five or six months and have been confining them as hostages for the reappearance of their husbands and their sons and brothers whom they compel to serve with the Bolshevik army."

Speaking of the operations of the Bolshevik government while he was in Petrograd, Mr. Francis said that they had nationalized all the industries there. The workmen determined their own wages and their hours of service. " Bolshevik government " he said, is printing now, it is variously estimated, from 50,000,000 to 100,000,000 roubles a day, and is intentionally keeping no account of it. They pay these men 300 to 500 roubles a month, but there is a state of famine in Petrograd."

REIGN OF TERROR.

Speaking of the fact that the Bolshevik government had not been recognized by any of the Allied or South American governments, Mr. Francis said: " Why they do not merit recognition? They do not merit even business relations because of their greed. They have instituted a reign of terror. They are killing every-

body who is wearing a white collar or who is educated and who is not a Bolshevist. Several of their provinces have nationalized women. I have seen the decree that has been presented to you."

NATIONALIZATION OF WOMEN.

Asked if that through observation and personal knowledge he knew this to be true, Mr. Francis said: "I only know it because I have seen it in the national publication of the Soviet government, the central Soviet newspaper. The central Soviet government has nationalized women by a decree which I saw in the *Izvestia*, the national publication of their government, making divorce and marriage so easy as to require only a motive to some man by a married couple that they had agreed to separate, and, likewise, a motive that two unmarried people had decided to marry. Now there is no limit of time as to how long the marriage shall hold, or the cause of the divorce."

Discussing the subject of President Wilson's message to the All-Russian Soviet Congress, asking it not to ratify the Brest-Litovsk treaty, Mr. Francis said that a Zinovieff, the head of the Soviet in Petrograd, considered the reply a rebuff to the President, his words being: "We slapped the President of the United States in the face." Mr. Francis regarded the message as an invitation to revolution in the United States and other countries.

BOLSHEVISTS HATE SOCIALISTS.

Replying to Senator King, Mr. Francis stated that at least three-fourths of the people of the zone occupied by the allied forces extended along the White sea and in the interior about 100 miles.

Senator KING: And they were anti-Bolshevists?

Mr. FRANCIS: They were anti-Bolshevists.

Senator KING: The president or chief executive of that government is now in Paris?

Mr. FRANCIS: Is now in Paris.

Senator KING: Representing his people there and is still anti-Bolshevist?

Mr. FRANCIS: Oh, he is still anti-Bolshevist, yes, and the Bolshevists have more hatred for the Socialists that

they expected to be with them than they have for the monarchists or for the Allies, even.

Senator KING: They have a hatred for the bourgeois and for those who want a stable, orderly, democratic form of government?

Mr. FRANCIS: Yes.

Senator KING: And to carry out their purposes, and to perpetuate themselves in power, they resort to murder, assassination, and every form of terrorism?

Mr. FRANCIS: They do.

Senator KING: And visit their displeasure upon inoffensive Russians, the same as they would on any other people, monarchists or enemies who are of alien nationality?

Mr. FRANCIS: They are not very severe with the monarchists, because the monarchists have been giving them money, according to reports.

Senator OVERMAN: The monarchists, after these people are through, expect to be able to establish the old régime?

Mr. FRANCIS: Yes.

Mr. Francis said that he had been denounced by the Bolshevists as a capitalistic ambassador and the United States as a capitalistic government. They had also contended that the United States had entered the war because the submarine warfare had prevented it selling supplies to the Allies; while it was also alleged that the United States had to participate in the war at the instance of the New York stock exchange and the capitalists of the country in order to find a market for American manufactured products. It was true that they treated he and his party better than they treated either the British or the French, because they were always hoping to be recognized by the United States government. They had always made out that the government was oppressing the working classes. Mr. Francis was also of the opinion that Trotsky and Lenine proposed to Bolshevize the government of the United States.

SUPPRESSED CRITICAL NEWSPAPERS.

Asked if he remembered a speech made by Trotsky in Moscow in which he denounced the American govern-

ment, Mr. Francis said that he remembered several speeches in which Trotsky had done this. He has not heard the speeches but had read them in the national organs of the Bolshevik government. The Bolsheviki suppressed all newspapers that opposed their own views. Even Gorky's newspaper, when he was opposing the Bolsheviki, was suppressed.

Mr. Francis would not go so far as to say that they nationalized all the printing establishments, but on February first last the Soviet Congress nationalized all natural products, and turned over to the peasants and workmen all instruments of production, such as factories, mines, etc.

GERMAN INFLUENCE IN RUSSIA.

Touching on the subject of German influence in Russia, Mr. Francis said: "I think Germany has had more control of the industries of Russia since the beginning of the war than she had before, although they have nominally arrested many of the officials and interned them. That was carried out under the imperial government, and it was pursued under the provisional government, but the German influence is now in every line of endeavour. They not only own two or three banks in Petrograd, and as many in Moscow, but, they control the manufacture of glass, the manufacture of chemicals, and the sugar interest and several other industries." He added that, from what he considered reliable authority, he had been given to understand that the Germans had petitioned the Soviet government to postpone the denationalizing of the banks in order to enable them to buy up more shares of stock.

WARNED BY THE ANARCHISTS.

Mr. Francis told of the threats made by anarchists that he would be held responsible for the release of Berkman, Emma Goldman, and Mooney. The first demonstration against the embassy was during the regime of the provisional government. On this occasion he had threatened to shoot any one who crossed the threshold of the embassy. A guard had been sent to protect the building, and the mob was dispersed without further trouble. There was a report that the mob

had been incited by a speech made by Lenine, but Mr. Francis had not been able to confirm the report. Under the Bolshevik regime he had been waited on by a committee of anarchists from Helsingfors who warned him that he would personally be held responsible if Berkman, Emma Goldman, and Mooney were not released. Some time after he had been presented with a resolution adopted at a meeting of about 200 anarchists, and which contained a similar threat. The resolution was delivered at the American embassy by Zolkin an official of the Soviet government under Trotsky and Lenine, indeed assistant minister of Foreign Affairs. After Lenine's attention had been called to the instance, Zolkin was removed and appointed Minister to Switzerland. Mr. Francis, at another time when a disturbance threatened the embassy, had asked for and received a Bolshevik guard, which in reality was worse than none at all.

BOLSHEVISM AKIN TO BARBARISM.

Mr. Francis stated that in his recommendations to the United States government he had consistently and persistently refused to recommend the recognition of the Bolsheviki. On this point he said, "I think that they were against our government as well as against all organized government; that their decrees concerning women, marriage, and divorce, meant the breaking up of the family and the return to barbarism, and I think so now." Asked respecting the activity of the Bolsheviki towards religion and the churches, Mr. Francis said that while they were not persecuting religion, they were not respectful to it.

Senator OVERMAN: Did they not confiscate the church lands?

Mr. FRANCIS: I do not think they did. I do not think they confiscated any of the church lands. I do not remember. They issued a decree on the morning of the 1st of February, when the last Soviet Congress was held in Petrograd, confiscating all the lands, making all the lands the property of the state.

Senator NELSON: That would include church lands, of course?

Mr. FRANCIS: That would include church lands, of course.

PEASANTS DO NOT OWN LAND.

During the discussion on this point, it was brought out that in apportioning the lands to the peasants, the Bolshevik government does not grant a title, but simply assigns the use of the lands to certain persons. Only such land is apportioned as the persons receiving it can till themselves. The title to the land remains in the state. Under the Soviet system a peasant can never become an owner of land.

HAVE COWED EVERYBODY.

Questioned as to why, if only 10 per cent of the 180,000,000 Russians supported the Bolsheviki, the other 90 per cent of the people did not overturn the Bolshevist government, Mr. Francis said: "It is just because of this reign of terror that the Bolshevists have instituted. **They have cowed everybody that is not for them. They do not prefer any charges against those whom they arrest, except that they are counter-revolutionists.** They have put to death 521 hostages in Petrograd, in revenge for the assassination of Uritzky. At one time they were transferring from Kronstadt prison, I thought it was 150 officers, but I have heard since that it was 300, and one report said 500. They were transferring these officers from Kronstadt prison, professedly to another prison. The bottom of the barge fell out, not by accident, and those officers were all drowned." Mr. Francis estimated that about 40,000,000 people were under the control of the Bolsheviki.

PROPAGANDA IN ALL COUNTRIES.

Asked if the Lenine-Trotsky government had ever intimated to him that they wanted to enter the war in order to aid the United States and her Allies against the central powers, Mr. Francis said: No, sir, they never stated it to me. I extended every encouragement I could to them to present an organized front in order to prevent the German divisions that had been on the eastern front being sent over to the western front, and I told Robins to say to them that I would recommend a modus vivendi if they would organize an opposition. They put to him a number of questions which he transmitted through the war department

code, asking what America and the Allies would do, but they invariably accompanied that by a statement that the great social revolution should not be interfered with. I think their object in the beginning was a worldwide social revolution. The correctness of that opinion has been demonstrated since by their propagandizing in all countries against all governments. They are attempting to break up the family, which was the first outgrowth towards society, and I think the predominance of Bolshevism throughout the world will mean a return to barbarism."

MENACE TO WORLD'S PEACE.

Referring to the ratification by the Russians of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, Mr. Francis said that it was at Lenine's demand that this was done. He pointed out that they had declared an armistice without consulting any of the Allies. He also thought that if Russia had lived up to her obligations the war would have ended a year before the end came, and that millions of lives could have been saved. He further said that in his opinion the Lenine-Trotsky government had done all they could to disintegrate and demoralize the Russian army. He also pointed out that in the exchange of prisoners the disabled Russians had been exchanged for sound Germans, which gave the central powers a decided advantage. Mr. Francis further said: "Germany has been exploiting Russia for thirty or forty years, and if this Bolshevik government is left in control, if disorder prevails in Russia, peace will be improbable in Europe. I think Germany will exploit Russia if the disorder is allowed to continue there; so that Germany instead of having been defeated in this war, will have gained a victory and will be stronger ten years from now than she was at the beginning of the war. To this he added that he regarded the Bolshevik government as a menace to the peace of Europe and to the peace of the world. A two years' and eight months' residence in Russia had brought to him the conclusion that there could never be an effective peace until the Bolshevik government was eliminated.

CHINESE IN BOLSHEVIST ARMY.

Questioned as to what he thought would follow the removal of Allied troops from Russia, Mr. Francis said:

" I think the Russians in the sections occupied by the Russian troops would all be murdered by the Bolsheviki. There was almost a panic in Archangel because they thought my departure meant the leaving of all the American troops, and then they said they would be at the mercy of the Bolshevists. Therefore I stayed there three weeks longer. The Bolsheviki are not nearly as numerous as they were four or six months ago: but on the other hand their organization is stronger because the have Chinese, they have Letts, and they have conscripted Russians. The Chinese were induced to go into the army by being starved. There is no food for anybody who does not join the army. There were 400,000 Chinese labourers in Russia, it was estimated, when I went there in 1916. I do not know how many of them went back to their native country, but I know there are tens of thousands of them in the Bolshevik army now. They were driven there because they could not get food otherwise.

Mr. Francis then mentioned the grades of those obtaining provision tickets. First there were the soldiers, then the men who work with their hands and work eight hours a day, then the men who had light work, then the Intelligentsia, that is the professions. Capitalists, he said, got no tickets. He further expressed the opinion that there were some Germans and Austrians in the Bolshevik army, and American troops had reported a very perceptible improvement in the discipline of the Red Guard, or Bolshevik troops, and attributed it to Russian officers who had been forced to drill the troops, and also the German and Austrian officers.

RUSSIAN WOMEN AS HOSTAGES.

Asked if it were common report that Russian women were being held as hostages to secure the services of their husbands in the army, Mr. Francis said it was. He entirely agreed with the following statement made by Col. Lebedoff with regard to the Bolshevik army: " Finally the Bolsheviki formed a hired army of a big kind; it was an army composed of war prisoners, mainly Hungarians and Chinese formerly employed on the Murmank railway; of Lettish detachments, almost all of whom joined the Bolsheviki; and of the dregs of the population, lured by high salaries paid them by the

Soviets, the light work in the service, the privileges, and mainly by the prospect of being well fed; for at that time all of Central Russia was starved. Only the Soviet and the Red Guard lived lavishly and simply on good rations."

Mr. Francis also said that Lenine and Trotsky had turned over the Black Sea fleet to the Germans. Questioned as to prisoners being condemned to death without trial, Mr. Francis said that this was done in Petrograd as well as in other places. He said: "Yes, that was the case in Petrograd. They called No. 2 Garoki Via the morgue. When a man was sent there he bade his farewell to hope. A man who had recently been in Moscow stated that he saw human blood flowing through the enclosure there where they had been shooting men charged with counter-revolutionary sentiments. They did not hesitate about shooting people. When the cholera was prevalent in Petrograd, as it was last August and September, Zeneviev, who was then the chief commisar of the Soviet, made a speech in which he charged the bourgeois with being responsible for the cholera and he said: "If any Red Guard thinks a physician is not doing his duty he will shoot him on the spot." That was giving license to the Red Guards to shoot physicians wherever they thought fit. "Oh! Its a disgrace to civilization, not only irreparable injury to Russia, but a disgrace to civilization!"

WORSE THAN ANARCHISTS.

Continuing, Mr. Francis said that the system in Russia to-day was really an anarchistic government. It was worse than an anarchistic government because anarchists believed only in destroying property, as he understood it, while the Bolsheviki believed in destroying human life as well as property. On this point he said: "Lenine and Trotsky and Radik and Tchicherin and Zonovieff realize that they have to kill people in order to maintain themselves. The bourgeois of that country and the Intelligentsia are all cowed." He added that they had no arms, which were now in the hands of the Red Guard, who had gone through the houses and taken arms from everybody.

Questioned as to what Lenine and Trotsky did to the representatives of the Kerensky government when

they got control, he said that the Kerensky representatives were imprisoned. Kerensky escaped, but he was the only Minister who had done so. Mr. Francis was asked to speak on the propagandist methods of the Bolsheviki, and on this subject he said: "They have been distributing Bolsheviki literature among all the armies of the Allied nations, and they have not spared our army. They have been distributing Bolshevik literature among the Czecho-Slovaks, among Deneken's army, among Krasnov's army, and among Kolchak's. They are preaching Bolshevik doctrines to the peasants all over Russia, but the peasants have become disgusted with them because they have taken their grain without paying them for it. They offer to pay sometimes in these roubles that they have printed off, but the peasants do not take them.

IMMENSE SUMS FOR PROPAGANDA.

Questioned about the Bolsheviki and the international propaganda, Mr. Francis said that on this point he only knew what he had heard, but he believed that they were sending their agents down into Germany, Austria, England, and France and that they were also sending many to America to promote the Bolshevik propaganda. He did not know how much money Radik had used for propaganda purposes in Germany, but he had seen it estimated at 30,000,000 roubles.

In response to enquiries about Mr. Treadwell, the American consul, Mr. Francis said that he had been under restraint for a number of months, and had been brutally treated by the Bolsheviki. He also knew another American, Mr. Child, in Petrograd, who, he said, was starved the other day. He added: "They starved a Frenchman there; a very prominent man who had lived in Russia eighteen years, Mr. Darcy, who was put in prison and released just before he died." He also knew Captain Cromy, the British officer who had been murdered by the Bolsheviki in the British embassy. "He (Captain Cromy) was in his embassy one evening" said Mr. Francis, "when the Bolshevik soldiers entered and demanded to make a search. There was no one in there with him but the three Bolshevik soldiers. He killed two of them before they killed him."